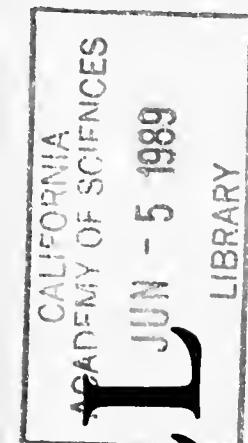


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THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society

Berkeley, California

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Volume 71

IT CAN HAPPEN HERE

The Prince William Sound-Valdez Exxon oil disaster can easily be repeated on a smaller scale on San Francisco Bay or on shipping lanes leading toward the Delta. It came close when two Standard Oil tankers collided off Alcatraz in January of 1971, but most of the oil flowed out through the Golden Gate to coat the Marin shores. Those who were part of the bird rescue and cleaning operation will never forget it. Oil tankers we'll have to accept for the foreseeable future, though their design could be improved. The risks of their passage through the Golden Gate and across the north Bay could be greatly reduced. But the oil-laden barges plying between the Bay and the Delta present another disaster potential, each unmanned barge carrying enough of the lethal stuff to coat the Bay and the shoreline.

Beside the towing tug with its two to four person crew there used to be crew on the barges, but greedy interests managed to eliminate them. Now, in the event of a sudden squall with high winds or a collision, perhaps at night, the tugboat crew would find it very

(continued on page 89)

SETTLING THE MOUNTAIN LION ISSUE

California's threatened mountain lions and other wildlife are the beneficiaries of a new state wide initiative which began last April. Volunteers are currently gearing up for June through September effort at fairs, shopping malls and local stores to collect over 600,000 signatures needed to qualify the CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT for the June ballot of 1990. This campaign seeks to stop permanently the trophy hunting of the California mountain lion and provide thirty million dollars a year for thirty years to acquire diminishing habitat for deer and endangered species.

This particular initiative is facing the critical issue—that all wildlife has to have a home. Like the successful Parks and Wildlife Initiative (Prop. 70), this measure will go before the voters with only a volunteer signature gathering effort. Your help is needed. If action is taken now, our beleaguered mountain lions and wildlife habitat will have a better chance of survival.

(continued on page 89)

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Friday-Sunday, June 2-4—Birding by Ear in Yosemite.

Friday-Sunday, June 2-4—Eagle Lake.

See *The Gull* for May for details.

Saturday-Sunday, June 10-11—Yuba Pass and vicinity. On Saturday meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Yuba Pass Summit parking area 15 miles east of Sierra City. We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents including flycatchers, warblers and Calliope Hummingbirds.

On Sunday meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 49 and 89 about 3 miles east of Sattley. We will caravan to Sierra Valley and see many of the birds of the eastern Sierra including Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Take I-80 to Truckee, go north on Hwy. 89 to Sierraville and take Hwy. 49 west to Yuba Summit. (Or take Hwy. 49 northeast from Auburn.) Camping is available at the Wild Plum and Chapman campgrounds on Hwy 49 (U.S. Forest Service). Lodging is available at Sierra City: Sierra Chalet (916-862-1110), Buttes Motel (916-862-1170), Herrington's Sierra Pines (916-862-1151), Basset Station Motel (916-862-1297), Sierra Buttes Inn Motel (916-862-1191) and Yuba River Inn (916-862-1122). Leader: Peter Allen (892-8063). (✓)

Wednesday, June 14—Mini-trip to Redwood Regional Park.

Sunday, June 18—Farallon Islands. See *The Gull* for May for details.

Friday-Sunday, June 23-25—Lassen Volcanic National Park. Join the Murphy family on the annual GGAS

family camping excursion to Lassen. In past years we have seen Willow, Hammond's, and Dusky Flycatchers, Black Swift, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Calliope Hummingbird, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker and most of the warblers and finches that breed in the mountains.

The more serious birders will meet at the Manzanita Lake Campgrounds store at 6:30 a.m. on Friday and Sunday. We will bird around the lake for 2-3 hours, return to camp for a quick breakfast and meet at the store for another outing at 10:30. On Friday we will hike one of Lassen's beautiful trails. This walk will be about 3 miles and paced for the convenience of our small children. (We may climb as much as 700 ft.) Wear sturdy shoes and bring lunch and liquids. Suntan lotion, a hat, mosquito repellent and warm clothing may also be necessary.

Saturday is a special day for everyone. We will meet by the camp store at 7:30 a.m. and caravan north to Burney Falls, Fall River Valley and Baum Lake. Bring lunch and liquids. This all day excursion of about 100 miles will include a 2 or 3 hour swim at Lake Britton. If you forget your swimsuit, the trails at Burney Park offer a wonderful diversion, and fishermen can try their luck in some of northern California's finest trout streams. Since this is a long and tiring day we suggest a get-together for dinner at Uncle Runt's a true center of grilled gourmet cuisine.

Stop by our campsite for further information. We will have a campfire

every evening beginning at 8 p.m. Bring your own chair (and cup of wine if you choose). We will provide hot water for tea or coffee. Check the campground bulletin boards or the office at Doan's for our poster and campsite number and any last minute changes in the schedule.

Sunday we will drive through the park, making frequent stops for birding, and end near the south entrance around 1 p.m.

From the Bay Area drive north on I-5 to its junction with Hwy. 44 in Redding. Go east on Hwy. 44 to the northwest entrance of Lassen. Camping facilities are available at Manzanita Lake. Lodging is available about 15 miles north of the park at Doane's Hat Creek Resort, Old Station (916-335-2359). Other information can be obtained from the park headquarters, Mineral, CA 96063. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy (564-0074). \$(✓)

Saturday/Sunday, June 24-25—

Mono Basin. Meet at 8 a.m. at Mono County Park 5 miles north of Lee Vining and just east of Hwy. 395. To get to Mono Basin take Hwy. 120 over Tioga Pass to the town of Lee Vining and proceed north to the meeting place. An alternate route is around Lake Tahoe to Hwy. 395 and then south to Mono County Park. We will spend Saturday birding the north side of the lake looking for common residents in various habitats. After a good day of birding join us at 6:30 p.m. in a potluck at Mono County Park.

On Sunday we will meet at 8 a.m. at the turnoff from Hwy. 120 to South Tufa State Preserve. Take Hwy. 395 south from Lee Vining to Hwy. 120 east. Turn left and proceed to South Tufa State Preserve turnoff. We will bird this area and the Jeffrey Pine forest south and east of here looking for Grey Flycatchers, Gnatcatchers and other

Mono Basin specialties.

Be prepared for hot, bright sun and/or cold wind and rain. The elevation of the basin is 6400 ft. and the temperature may drop at night. Bring lunches for both days and be prepared to hike.

Forest Service Campgrounds are available southwest of Lee Vining in Lee Vining Canyon, and north of town up Lundy Canyon. Motels in Lee Vining include: Best Western Lakeview Motel (619/647-6543), Gateway Motel (619/647-6467), and Murphey's Motel (619/647-6316). Leaders: Helen and Paul Green (526-5943). (✓)

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

Problems: If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader, or need information regarding a trip, or can take a passenger on a trip, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (524-2399).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

WILDLIFE PASS FOR SALE

You can buy your California Wildlife Pass, native Species Stamp and even a subscription to Outdoor California, Fish and Game's beautiful magazine, at the GGAS office. These are all part of a campaign to save California's wildlife through active public participation in Fish and Game programs and ecological reserves. Your Wildlife Pass entitles you to year-round entry into the Department's managed areas. The cost is \$10.00. The Native Species Stamp is \$8.00 and helps protect and save endangered habitats throughout the state. A subscription to Outdoor California is \$5.00. Stop by our office and **SAVE OUR WILD PLACES!**

OBSERVATIONS

March 27 through April 25

Birdathons usually are scheduled during migration to capitalize on high numbers of species. In the spring birders hope wintering species will linger, migrants will arrive in droves, resident species will be singing their heads off, and vagrants will overwhelm them. GGAS's April 15 Birdathon didn't exactly sparkle in any of those categories, but competing teams came up with good numbers of birds anyway (the winning team found 176 species). Reportable species mostly were of the wintering rarities variety. However, a few warblers, flycatchers, grosbeaks and buntings returned to their favorite spots to make the day rewarding.

Tubenoses

Black-footed Albatross numbers began their spring climb. Up to twenty Black-footeds were noted on a pelagic trip from Half Moon Bay April 2 (RSTh, THK), and sixty were seen from a fishing boat to the Cordell Bank April 21 (JMc). One Black-footed Albatross was seen from Pfeiffer Beach April 8 (AKr). Laysan's Albatrosses were found on these same two trips: two out of Half Moon Bay April 2 (RSTh, THK), and one near Cordell Bank April 21 (JMc). Observers on a pelagic trip from Half Moon Bay April 2 found one to two Pink-footed and thousands of Sooty Shearwaters (MLE) and on the Cordell Bank trip April 21 one Pink-footed and good numbers of Sooty Shearwaters (JMc).

Ducks

A Eurasian Green-winged Teal was found at Arrowhead Marsh April 8 (BU). The Bolinas Lagoon Eurasian Wigeon lingered at least to April 15 (DWm, et al.). The pair of Tufted Ducks at Old Sutro Baths was seen March 27 but gone by April 2 (*fide* JM, CSp). The male Harlequin Duck at Bolinas Lagoon was last reported April 15 (DWm, DEQ). A

female Harlequin was seen eight miles west of Martin's Beach on a Half Moon Bay pelagic trip April 2 (RSTh). A female Oldsquaw was found at Moss Landing March 29 (MP), while the Princeton Harbor Oldsquaw was last noted April 1 (DSg).

Hawks through Terns

Late Rough-legged Hawks were found by two of the birdathon teams April 15: the "Nashville Warblers" had one at Spaletta Plateau (DWm, et al.), and the "California Thrashers" found one off Cloverdale Road, San Mateo Co. (DSg, et al.). Blue Grouse have been seen at King Ridge, Sonoma Co. this spring. Five were found there April 6 (GFi).

Eleven Lesser Golden-Plover foraged at Lawson's Landing through April 18 (RHa), and seven were still at Spaletta Plateau on April 12 (DWm, BHo). A Surfbird found its way to Beach Park Road in Foster City April 20 (AKr). A Baird's Sandpiper in breeding plumage was found in Princeton Harbor near a creek mouth April 16 (JM). Another Baird's Sandpiper was at Las Gallinas sewage ponds April 22 (CLF).

Some Pomarine Jaegers and one Parasitic Jaeger were spotted from Pigeon Pt. during a two-hour seawatch March 26 (RSTh), and twenty Pomarines were seen on a Whale Center pelagic trip out of Half Moon Bay April 2 (MLE, RSTh, THK). A second year Franklin's Gull (or possibly the first winter bird molted into first summer plumage?) was at the Stockton sewage ponds April 18 (DGY). The Little Gull, present through the winter at and near Stockton sewage ponds, was last noted there April 2 (EH). Black-legged Kittiwakes continued to be abundant through early April, with good numbers on a pelagic trip out of Half Moon Bay April 2 (RSTh, THK). Five to six Least Terns returned to Crown Beach and Alameda South Shore April 22 (BWk, LRF).

Landbirds

Three Lesser Nighthawks off Santa Fe Grade Road, Merced Co., late in the day on April 15, pleased one tired team of birdathoners (LJP, et al.). Lewis' Woodpeckers continued to be seen in Chileno Valley through April 3 (DN), and another was found off Rockpile Road in Sonoma Co. the same day (DN). The Lewis Woodpecker on Pleasants Valley Road, Solano Co. was still present at least through April 15 (PDG). Lewis' Woodpeckers were on their breeding grounds in San Antonio Valley at least by April 15 (LJP, et al.). A Red-naped Sapsucker was at Ed Levin Co. Park near Milpitas April 2-9 (JMS, KGH, RKo).

Spring returnees included six Purple Martins spotted at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park April 8 (AKr), three Bank Swallows at Pescadero marsh April 16 (PJM), a Lazuli Bunting along Livermore Mines Road April 4 (LJP, DSi, HG), Hooded Orioles in San Francisco April 8 (SD), and in Pleasanton April 19 (SCx), and numerous Lawrence's Goldfinch along Del Puerto Canyon and Mines Road by March 28 (AWi, mob).

Pygmy Nuthatches were found in at least five locations in the Oakland Hills along Skyline Drive, April 8-15 (DSi). The Tennessee Warbler at Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park continued to be seen through April 19 (SCx, TO), and the Black-and-white Warbler in Golden Gate Park moved from North Lake to Middle Lake and back through April 16 (CSp, mob, DSg). Another Black-and-white Warbler was banded at Palomarin April 23 (JBa). The American Redstart at Middle Lake remained at least through April 19 (mob).

A Clay-colored Sparrow visited a San Jose residence April 23 (SPe). A pair of Lark Buntings was found at the Molotte Road turnoff near Sutter Buttes

April 12 (BED), and another was found near the intersection of Pass Road and W. Butte Road, Sutter Co. April 15 (BED). A singing White-throated Sparrow, always a treat on the West Coast, was found at Moss Beach, San Mateo Co. April 16 (MBn). A male Yellow-headed Blackbird visited Las Gallinas sewage ponds April 22 (DES). Eight Red Crossbills were at Five Brooks April 23 (MBu).

Observers: Beverly Anderson, Jenny Barnes (JBa), Michael Burns (MBn), Mark Butler (MBu), Debbie Cotter, Scott Cox (SCx), Bruce E. Deuel, Ann Dewart, Sunny Dike, Michael L. Ezekiel, Carter L. Faust, Leora R. Feeney, George Finger (GFi), Helen Green, Paul D. Green, Edward Hall, Rob Hayden (RHa), Kevin G. Hintsa, Bob Hogan (BHo), David A. Holway, Alan S. Hopkins, Ted H. Koundakjian, Richard Kovak (RKo), Andy Kratter (AKr), Earl Lebow, Donna Lion, John McClung (JMc), Peter J. Metropulos, Joseph Morlan, Scott Morrical (SMo), Dan Nelson, Trent Orr, Michael Perrone, Steve Perry (SPe), Lina J. Prairie, Dave E. Quady, David C. Rice, Mary Louise Rosegay, Donald E. Schmoldt, Dianne Sierra (DSi), Dan Singer (DSg), Jean Marie Spoelman, Chris Spooner (CSp), Maurey Stern, Ken Taylor, Ron S. Thorn, Bob Ulvang, Bruce Walker (BWk), Janet A. Wessel, Anna Wilcox (AWi), David Wimpfheimer (DWm), Dennis Wolff (DWo), David G. Yee.

Please report observations to Northern California Rare Bird Alert: 528-0288 or 524-5592.

—HELEN GREEN

Observations Editor
2001 Yolo Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94707

CONSERVATION NOTES

ACTION FOR WETLANDS

You can play a role in saving our seasonal wetlands, and it will only take you five minutes! On April 26, a coalition of environmental groups including GGAS presented a report to the EPA: *Endangered Habitat: A report on the Status of Seasonal Wetlands in San Francisco Bay*. It presented information from two studies, one performed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the other by an environmental consultant hired jointly by the State Attorney General and our environmental coalition. The study conclusions were shocking. Since 1956 San Francisco Bay (south of the Bay Bridge) has lost 61% of its seasonal wetlands. Projected future development would destroy another 12%. This means we will have lost 73% of our seasonal wetlands!

Even worse, vegetated seasonal wetlands losses have already reached the 73% figure and projected losses would take it into the 80% loss range. These vegetated seasonal wetlands are the primary habitat for an endangered species, the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse.

These are scary numbers—worse than we had anticipated. From 17,953 acres of seasonal wetlands in 1956 to only 6959 as of this writing, and with projected losses down to only 4927 acres in the entire South Bay. We are truly facing the near extinction of an entire habitat.

North Bay (San Pablo Bay) losses were much less extensive (10% between 1975 and 1988 and another 5% projected loss from projects already in the planning stage). This, however, is clearly due to the much slower rate of development in the North Bay. Anyone who is familiar with the rapid growth of the North Bay in the last few years

will realize that it is only a question of time before North Bay seasonal wetlands face the same pattern of destruction that the South Bay has seen.

What can we do to halt this habitat destruction. What can *you* do to preserve this habitat upon which depend the lives of millions of shorebirds (such as the western sandpiper and the snowy plover), ducks (such as the Cinnamon teal and other dabbling ducks), geese and many other creatures, such as the Salt marsh harvest mouse?

YOU CAN WRITE A LETTER!
Our Report was also a Petition to the EPA. We petitioned the EPA to preserve all remaining South Bay seasonal wetlands, and critically threatened North Bay seasonal wetlands through the use of the EPA's 404(c) authority.

What is 404(c)? This is a part of the Clean Water Act enacted by Congress. It allows the Administrator of the EPA to act pre-emptively prohibit all development (technically the discharge of fill onto a wetland) on wetlands whose loss would have "an unacceptable adverse effect."

We believe that after a 61% loss, and a projected 73% loss, it is clearly time for the EPA to say that any future loss of seasonal wetlands is unacceptable. Who knows how much wildlife, our birds and mammals, reptiles and plants, have already ceased to exist because of our present wetland losses. Future losses could truly mean extinction for some species and drastic reductions in numbers for others. Future losses are simply not tolerable.

You need only write a couple of paragraphs. Make sure you talk about wildlife values (habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl) that have already been lost and that will be lost if no action is taken by the EPA and ask them to initiate

404(c) actions on all South Bay seasonal wetlands and threatened North Bay seasonal wetlands. Again, a short letter is all it takes and you can make a difference. **THEY DO READ AND LISTEN TO OUR LETTERS!!**



And then, if you can, please send a copy of your letter to your representative in Congress. This, too, is very important.

The addresses are:

Mr. Daniel McGovern
Regional Administrator
EPA, Region IX
215 Fremont Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Your representative's address is:
Representative _____

House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The facts are devastating, the losses catastrophic. With your help we will be able to protect seasonal wetlands that still remain. But only with your help. Please write—if you need help drafting a letter, please feel free to call me at 282-5937.

—ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

STRIP MINE THREAT

The old ghost town of Bodie, a national historic landmark and State Historic Park, is becoming a focal point for opposition to a new type of strip mining that is spreading throughout the West.

Using the new “heap-leach” process, these surface mining operations can profitably recover minute amounts of gold—0.069 ounces per ton, less gold than a '49er had stuck under his fingernail. Yet they do enormous damage to the landscape; at Bodie the top 400 feet would be bulldozed off the mile-long ridge that forms the backdrop for the town. Effects on the fragile buildings of the old town itself could be disastrous.

A similar mine near Elko, Nevada, is digging a pit 500 feet deep and half a mile wide, and a University of Nevada Reno conservationist predicts that with the 80 to 100 such mines operating or in the planning stage in Nevada, the State will soon be “pock-marked like the surface of the moon.”

At least half a dozen strip mines are operating or in the permit stage in California, and a couple more are working on privately owned land, with others in prospect.

Auduboners and wildlife agencies are particularly concerned over the loss of ducks, geese, shorebirds and mammals ranging from deer to field mice in the huge recycling ponds filled with cyanide laced water from the leaching “heaps” or ore the size of Cheop’s pyramid. (Hence the “heap-leach” name for the process.)

The Nevada Fish and Game Department has tallied 5,700 bird and mammal deaths in mine ponds over the last five years, despite preventive efforts, distress calls, noise making cannons, robot boats and Heavy Metal “music”.

Nets over smaller ponds seem to work fairly well; only neutralization of the cyanide, an expensive process, works for the large ponds.

A mining operation in the Bureau of Land Management's East Mojave national Scenic Area—to be a new National Park under Senator Cranston's Desert Bill—has promised to build "guzzlers" to lure wild creatures away from the fatal ponds.

So far environmentalists have been able only to slow down the multi-million dollar international mining corporations, but they hope Bodie can be a rallying point.

The California State Parks Rangers Association has formed a Save Bodie! Committee and are asking Audubon Chapters and others to spread the word and to write to state and federal legislators and the Governor urging a strong stand to protect Bodie and a hard look at the environmental consequences of this kind of mining throughout the West.

The official application for a mining permit at Bodie goes to the Mono County Board of Supervisors. It is important that the Board's members know of the concerns of recreationists who are the mainstay of the county's tourist-based economy. Please write to them, and ask that they keep you informed.

For more information on the Bodie situation write Save Bodie!, P.O. Box 28366, Sacramento, CA 95828.

—BILL DILLINGER
Conservation Committee
Sacramento Chapter

ANOTHER LAWSUIT?

To our dismay, the Board of GGAS has found itself contemplating a new lawsuit. The City of Alameda has approved the creation of a new ferry terminal and route that may have serious,

possibly devastating, impacts on the endangered species the California Least Tern and on a marine plant called eelgrass. They have approved this project without performing the kind of detailed study that is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). At the time this goes to press, the Board is considering suing the City of Alameda to force it to undertake the appropriate studies required by CEQA.

The ferry will go right through the endangered least terns feeding grounds. Of equal significance is that the ferry will go right next to, or through, a large eelgrass bed. Eelgrass is a marine vegetation that is known to play an important role in fish breeding and survival of the young. In particular, much of the Bay's herring fishery may depend on the existence of eelgrass. San Francisco Bay has only limited amounts of eelgrass and those that exist are very precious. The Least Tern is known to prefer eelgrass bed areas for feeding. Eelgrass is known to be a very delicate organism.

There is reason to believe that ferry traffic next to an eelgrass bed could seriously impact that bed. It could also disrupt the least tern. We have notified the City of Alameda of our concerns and asked them to perform a complete Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on this project. The US Fish and Wildlife Service asked the City to do a complete EIR. The City has refused to do this and instead approved the project after doing a very superficial study with no public input.

We are not against ferries. Indeed, we believe alternate transportation is essential to the health of the Bay. More roads will lead to the urge to fill more wetlands. No, we welcome alternate transit such as ferries. BUT, they must be appropriately placed so that their

impact does not become even worse than new roads. Alameda does have plans for another ferry on the Estuary—a site where a ferry should have no adverse environmental impacts. A complete EIR would analyse this alternative and allow the City to make a knowledgeable choice as to the location of a ferry terminal. An EIR will allow the City and wildlife agencies and the public to better understand the possible impacts of the present ferry project to our natural resources—and an endangered species.

If we go to court it will be to ensure that the City of Alameda undertakes possibly environmentally damaging actions only after a complete analysis of the possible impacts is prepared. We need decisions based on intelligence and information. Not hurried decisions based on guesswork.

—ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

IT CAN HAPPEN HERE

(continued from page 81)

difficult to get lines on the drifting barges.

There is pending legislation in Sacramento that would greatly reduce the menace of these unmanned barges, as well as providing tugs to meet tankers outside the Golden Gate. This is Senator Milton Marks' SB 1194, known as the Tanker Escort Bill, Senator Marks or your own Senator may be reached through his local office or by addressing a letter to him at the State Senate, Sacramento, CA 94814. Remember, this legislation may need support again when it reaches the State Assembly.

Then there is always the risk of a spill from an oil refinery or oil reclamation facility, as demonstrated in April of 1988 by the Martinez Shell Oil flow that mired the shores of the Carquinez Straits, a regional shoreline, and a bird marsh. In April 1989 the AC Transit

spill on Temescal Creek at the precious Emeryville Crescent marsh. This spill may have flowed for several days before its detection! The spill was of some 1,000 gallons. At this writing the amount of damage to this habitat has yet to be assessed.

Bay shore surveillance must be greatly increased, particularly in industrial areas. Beside more concerned citizen watchfulness, this demands personnel assigned for this particular purpose, some to be engaged by state or federal agencies and some by large installations like refineries. When indifferent or incompetent managements and employees are identified, they must not be protected by any company "good ol' boy" or "union brother" traditions. (I like to recall how, some years ago, our own Elsie Roemer discovered an illegal public utility land fill in San Leandro Bay and promptly made them remove it!).

Since referring to the US Coast Guard at our April general meeting I was informed by their district Marine Safety office that they can only enforce maritime laws and regulations and cannot establish their own rules. They are suffering severe budget cuts and shortages of personnel and equipment. But it might prevent another disaster like Valdez Exxon if someone in authority could interview the captain, mates and other key officers before each sailing of a loaded tanker.

—PAUL F. COVEL

MOUNTAIN LIONS

(continued from page 81)

At one time, mountain lions could be found from the Yukon to the tip of South America and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Today, they survive in only the western third of North America. While only the West provides the rugged wilderness habitat necessary for the mountain lion's survival, that habitat

is being bulldozed daily to make way for development. Many of California's greatest predators including the grizzly bear, jaguar and timber wolf are extinct. Only the mountain lion remains.

Between 1907 and 1963 more than 12,400 mountain lions were slaughtered for bounty. From 1963 to 1969 they were shot on sight as 'varmints'. From 1969 to 1971 they were classified as game animals and legally killed for sport. From 1971 through 1985 the Legislature and the Governor had declared a moratorium on mountain lion hunting. Influenced by the State Fish and Game Commission's recommendation in 1985, Gov. Dukemejian vetoed the legislature's extension of the 14-year moratorium.

Only through concerted conservationist efforts, led by the Mountain Lion Preservation Foundation, have two successful lawsuits prevented the sanctioned game hunting of our state's greatest predator. But this is not enough. The CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT will once and for all take the decision of whether or not to shoot mountain lions for trophies out of the hands of the State Fish and Game Commission and the Governor, and place it firmly in the hands of you, the voter. With the help of Audubon Society members and hundreds of other committed volunteers we can protect enough of our endangered wildlife habitat so that our priceless natural heritage will remain intact.

You are invited to attend bi-weekly training workshops at your local campaign headquarters. To volunteer, please fill out the card provided and mail it today. Your regional Mountain Lion Initiative coordinator will then call you. You may also phone: in the East Bay (2980 Adeline) 548-0885, or in San Francisco (210 Fell St.) 255-6016.

—DAVID VINOKUR

BACK YARD BIRDER

"What's all the flap about Spotted Owls?" you may ask. The subject is hot because of the court clashes between environmentalists and the timber and logging industry. There are an estimated 1500 pairs of Spotted Owls in the northwest and No. Cal. so they are not in imminent danger of extinction, but they are a threatened species. These birds received a reprieve when the US Fish & Wildlife Service reversed its earlier position and said that it will begin a year-long process to determine if the owl should be formally designated as a threatened species. They are already on the Audubon Society's Blue List. This list was begun in 1971, published in *American Birds*, as a means of identifying patterns of impending or ongoing serious losses in regional bird populations. Many species on the Blue List remain locally common, but appear to be undergoing noncyclic declines. In contrast, by the time a species is officially listed as Endangered by the US F & W Service it is often on its last legs. So the Blue List is a sort of early warning system.

Why were Spotted Owls singled out as a *cause celebre*? Like many now-extinct animals, this owl's existence requires very specific needs without which its numbers dwindle. FACT: The Spotted Owl's habitat is dense coniferous forests (especially old-growth fir) and shaded, steep-walled canyons containing deciduous trees. This type of forest is disappearing rapidly by logging. FACT: Each pair requires 1400 acres for their home range, very large in comparison with other birds. Ten years ago a mere 100 acres of Douglas Fir was worth \$1,600.00! Also, this owl must compete, usually unsuccessfully with the Great Horned Owl. FACT: The Spotted Owl pairs do not breed yearly, they average only 2

young, and the survival rate of the young is very low. This may be partly because these owls are very mild-mannered and do not attempt to defend their nests.

I find all owls attractive, but the Spotted Owl is particularly endearing. I've seen its eastern counterpart, the Barred Owls, but have never seen this shy, retiring bird. It can be lured on a dark day or at night by imitating its barking call. Unlike the Great Horned Owl, it has dark eyes and no ear tufts. It is decidedly nocturnal and hunts wood rats, mice, bats and small birds as well as moths, crickets and beetles. These birds will cache excess food for future use. The monogamous pair builds a nest in a cave or a cavity in a shaded canyon cliff, a tree cavity or even an abandoned raven or hawk's nest. The male feeds the brooding female and continues until the young are 2 weeks old.

Most of the old-growth forests are found on National Forest Land. Sale of the timber has been blocked by environmentalists' law suits. I grew up in the northwest and enjoyed many hours in such "forests Primevl." My favorite retreat was covered with a carpet of moss and grey moss hung from huge firs. They towered over the understory of alder and hazelnut trees, ferns and thimbleberry. Forget-me-nots trailed in the crystal clear creek which bubbled over tiny clay-colored pebbles. Fish, crawdads, tiny snails and water insects darted about in the cold water. The only sounds were the trees sighing, the creek's gurgling, a Hermit Thrush sweetly singing, and the occasional raucous warning from a Stellar's Jay. That place is gone forever, part of someone's home, and along with it, the hundreds of animals, birds and insects which comprised that unique ecosystem. Other such magical places still

exist. I hope they can be saved, along with the Spotted Owl. They are places where you can restore your soul, places to escape from the frantic world, places for dreams to be spun.

—MEG PAULETICH

WETLANDS AND AWARDS

The Wetlands Benefit Drawing was a success on many levels. First, we raised just over \$17,000 for our legal fund. Second, we had a well attended and exciting meeting with a full evening of awards, winners and an informative presentation on several areas of Africa from George Peyton.

And April 13 was certainly not an unlucky night for Dr. John McCuskey of San Francisco! Dr. McCuskey is the happy recipient of our Wetlands quilt. He purchased his tickets at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge where we had it on display. Needless to say, he was overwhelmed when he saw his prize at closer inspection. We have encouraged him to exhibit the quilt whenever the opportunity arises for educational purposes. Many other prizes were awarded that evening and in the following days. All were delighted, of course.

Highlighting the beginning of the evening was the presentation of our Elsie Roemer Conservation Awards. This year the committee chose *Mildred Bennett* and *Paul Covel*, both active chapter members.

Mildred Bennett, alias Millie, is a familiar face and name to many members of GGAS, Sierra Club and the Mono Lake Committee. She has worked as tirelessly for those organizations as she has for us, organizing their field trips far and near. Last year she saw a need to promote wetlands protection and set out to let the Bay Area

know about our efforts and our Wetlands Benefit Drawing is largely due to Millie—and to the quilters, of course. We are lucky to have such a dedicated and imaginative volunteer in our chapter. Thank you, Millie.

Paul Covel is our other Conservation Award winner for 1988. Paul has really deserved it for many, many years. Oakland's Lake Merritt was the first legislated Wildlife Refuge in the entire nation (created in 1870) and Paul was the first Naturalist for this Refuge, starting in 1947. Paul has devoted his life to wildlife, wildlife conservation and wildlife education.

Paul is a past president of GGAS, now serves on its Conservation Committee and is simply ceaseless in his activities directed at preserving our natural world.

Paul has written two entertaining books: *People are for the Birds*, and *Beacons Along a Naturalist's Trail*. The first is about the creation of the Lake Merritt Refuge and Paul's experiences there, in the second Paul writes about the many people, some professional naturalists, other amateurs (including many GGAS members) who influenced his life as a naturalist and conservationist. The chapters about past GGAS members are very striking as Paul records our battle to preserve San Leandro Bay wetlands (a battle we lost and which resulted in Harbor Bay Isle).

We are truly fortunate to have Paul among our ranks, and I feel particularly lucky to have known Paul. He is truly a man to emulate. And I encourage you to read his books. For me, especially, his latest—which we have for sale at our office. Thanks Paul for your wonderful and unceasing contributions to GGAS and the entire Bay Area.

—ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

BIRDATHON '89 SUCCESS

On April 15 the troops were up at the crack of dawn, marshalling their forces, gearing up, swigging down the gallons of coffee. Binoculars poised, avid birders all, the various teams of GGAS came, saw, and conquered specie after specie, racking up the numbers, until hundreds of birds from loons to finches were spotted, noted, and counted. Excitement mounted as expected birds were located in areas as planned, only to flag when other birds failed to materialize. Birdathon 89 was underway, indeed off and running. All for a good cause; the Mono Lake Legal Defense Fund and for certain GGAS programs. Of equal importance was the enthusiasm shared and experienced by team members. Comraderie and esprit de corps became the order of the day, so much so that teams are already planning for next year's birdathon.

The winning team of Birdathon '89 was the California Thrashers, headed by Alan Hopkins. They spotted a grand total of 176 species. Congratulations to them. For their just desserts, the team will receive a pelagic trip, courtesy of GGAS. Also, they have the chance to compete nationally for even bigger prizes.

The other teams did themselves proud, either in the numbers of birds spotted, or the money raised, or in the fun mustered. To give them credit: the Nashville Warblers identified 169 species; the Not So Oldsquaws did not so badly, seeing 163 different birds; the Red-Eyed Vireos came upon 152; Cheep Trills counted 114; Murphy's Mob and the Purple Martins tied, each team identifying 111 species; the Gray Jays noted 77 different birds.

GGAS extends heartfelt thanks to all those who participated, birders and

pledgers alike. We are particularly grateful to all those who have sent in their checks, thus far totaling \$2800 (and still counting). If you have not yet fulfilled your pledge, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Also, it's still not too late to take part in the bird-athon after the fact. Choose a team and pledge per species; we'll send you a list of birds spotted in appreciation for your good deed. Mono Lake needs every dollar you can contribute, and GGAS depends on your continued support for such important programs as the rare bird alert and our field trips. Give what you can for this vital environmental cause. Many thanks.

—TOM WHITE

SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY PLANS

In the past SFBBO has undertaken such diverse projects as monitoring the Alviso California Gull Colony, monitoring and helping to control botulism outbreaks, censusing colonial waterbird colonies in the south bay and censusing heron colonies on Bair Island.

This year we are starting a new study and adding to the old ones. New is a census of shorebirds, waterfowl and gulls about twice a month on a few salt ponds near Alviso in the south bay. This is important because San Francisco Bay may be included as hemispheric site with the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network as well as the twice annual census that PRBO does. PRBO finds that a good portion of the shorebirds spend time on a bit of land we know as the Knapp property. They verify what we have observed; many shorebirds use only a few ponds. The new project is to find out why. In-

tensive (year round) and long term (five years) this project will help SF Bay National Wildlife Preserve and Leslie Salt personnel with their management decisions. So what is needed? Financial support is always appreciated but we are also looking for volunteers to help make the project a success.

In addition, changes in the California Gull colony study will need volunteers to build enclosures, band chicks (at night, to reduce disturbance), help with census taking and monitoring. The colony continues to grow at an amazing rate. In 1981 there were about 30 pairs. During the 1988 season we surveyed over 2,000 nests. It appears that colony will continue to grow because of abundant food and potential nest sites. There is interest in our colony, and we have agreed to cooperate in a comparative study to see if there are differences in egg energetics as well as fledgling success.

The lands we study in our Colonial Nesting Bird Survey (herons, egrets, terns, gulls, and swallows) have given a view, too, of the other birds nesting in the area: stilts, avocets, plovers, sparrows, harriers, hawks, owls and waterfowl. The data gathered has been a very important source of information for both the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Dept. of Fish and Game. With more volunteers, we could expand this study.

With some studies, training may be involved. You can brush up on your identification skills in classes led by resident experts. Why not become a member? And, if you feel the itch to get dirty and want to help call the SFBBO director, Donald Starks at (408) 946-6548 or write him at P.O. Box 127, Alviso, CA 95002.

ADVENTURE TRAVEL FOR MONO

Past trips have raised about \$40,000 to help save Mono Lake. These have included Alaska's Southeast Passage, Galapagos Islands and Amazon, Alaskan Odyssey by land sea and sea, a Tour and Trek in Bhutan and Thailand, and lastly, Antarctica.

Now, looking ahead to 1990-92 the Mono Lake Committee would like to know what to do next. Here are some suggestions:

A cruise with many landings in Greenland and Canada

A cruise and visits to islands of Indonesia

A Safari in Kenya and Tanzania
Australia and Tasmania

Costa Rica

New Zealand

Many land trips could be customized to our group as to itinerary and activity. Some advantages of group travel are lower rates, special itineraries, special treatment, common interests and so on. It takes at least a year to set up a trip, so let us know now if you are interested. Nothing will be done unless there is sufficient show of interest soon. So please write or call *Mildred Bennett*, 2719 Marin Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708, 526-1260. State your wishes, name, address, phone number for future information. Look ahead!

DAY LONG PELAGIC TRIP

A remarkable twelve hour pelagic trip is scheduled for Sunday, June 11 by the Whale Center. Leaving Sausalito at 6 a.m. and returning at 6 p.m. the cruise will include the Farallones and Cordelle Banks looking for birds and marine mammals. If interested phone the Whale Center at 654-6621.

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

Once again the educational efforts of ACR and our docents have been recognized for their excellence. National Audubon Society Vice President for Education, Marshal Chase, presented ACR with an award for "Outstanding Education Achievement". It recognizes our "outstanding commitment to education and, in particular, for free docent conducted tours which are offered to schools and other groups," and to the volunteers who conduct those programs. This is a pat on the back for all those who contribute to the ranch, the docents, the officers, directors and advisors, the financial contributors, and those who have shaped the ACR philosophy over the years. If you are one of those, give yourself a pat on the back. Congratulations!

It's not too late to host at the Ranch. This is a great way to get to know a little more about our sanctuary. If you haven't already done so, take this opportunity to join the active supporters of ACR, call Edris at (415) 868-9244 to let her know you would like to join us as a weekend host.

ACR held its annual donor recognition event at the Bouverie Audubon Preserve on Saturday, April 29. This is our way of thanking supporters who donated \$100 or more during the past year. Guests were given guided tours through the flowering fields and oak woodlands by ranch biologists. Later they enjoyed a catered lunch with board members and staff.

The ACR Board of Directors opposes the proposed oil lease off the central California coast. As holders of about 1500 coastal acres on Bolinas Lagoon and Tomales Bay, we are deeply concerned about the potentially catastrophic

environmental and economic impacts of oil drilling off our coast. We urge you to join ACR in opposing Oil Lease #119. Please write to your congressional representative and your senators expressing your general concern about drilling for oil off the Northern California Coast and your specific opposition to Oil Lease #119.

YEAR OF THE EAGLE

As you no doubt know, an immature Golden Eagle disrupted the nesting cycle at ACR. It took several young from the nests and scared off adult birds. Ranch biologists decided to temporarily close the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve

on the weekend of April 8 and 9. But school children from around the Bay Area were scheduled to visit us. Rather than cancel the school program, our incredible docents met the challenge. They developed a special program with ACR biologist Ray Peterson which shifted the school visitation site to Volunteer Canyon and provided an alternate educational experience.

There is still time to visit the Ranch and see the herony. The eagle has returned too, but we remain hopeful the herony remains active until the Ranch's public season ends on July 16. Don't miss us.

—DAN MURPHY

GIFTS and BEQUESTS

FOR GGAS

FOR GGAS In Memory of

Judge Norman Gregg

Gift of

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The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 1250 Addison St., #107B, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.



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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$8 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

**The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.**

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.